

Message Text

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64

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 L-03 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 OES-06 AID-05 ERDA-05 NSF-01 INT-05 IO-13

EB-07 COME-00 /091 W

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R 281700Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8454

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE RABAT 2334

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD EINV EGEN PFOR MO

SUBJECT: VISIT BY USAID TECHNICIAN TO SAHARA TO INSTALL AND TEST
DESALINIZATION EQUIPMENT

REF: STATE 85398#

1. USG HAS FOR SEVERAL YEARS UNOFFICIALLY DISSUADED US FIRMS FROM INVESTING IN FORMER SPANISH SAHARA TO SPARE THEM FROM ENTANGLEMENT IN DECOLONIZATION COMPLICATIONS. WE HAVE, HOWEVER, NEVER DISCOURAGED STRAIGHTFORWARD COMMERCIAL EQUIPMENT SALES.

2. GOM IS NOW IN PROCESS OF SORTING OUT ITS ATTITUDES TOWARDS FOREIGN PRIVATE ACTIVITIES IN AREA. WHILE POLICY REMAINS FLUID, ENOUGH IS NOW KNOWN TO MAKE IT EVIDENT THAT SOME SECTORS--PROBABLY INCLUDING NATURAL RESOURCE PROSPECTING AND EXPLOITATION--WILL BE OPEN TO NON-MOROCCANS. IT THEREFORE APPEARS IN US INTEREST THAT PRIVATE AMERICAN FIRMS GET AN EARLY START IN LOOKING INTO THE MORE ATTRACTIVE POSSIBILITIES BEFORE THESE ARE PREEMPTED BY OTHERS.

3. SOME MONTHS AGO, GOM EXPRESSED INTEREST IN PURCHASING
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A NUMBER OF SURPLUS US DESALINATION UNITS. PURCHASE

ARRANGEMENTS HAVE NOW BEEN COMPLETED AND GOM WISHES TO SUBJECT FIRST RECONDITIONED UNITS TO ON-THE-SPOT TEST IN SAHARA, PROBABLY NEAR EL AYOUN. EMBASSY SEES NO LEGAL OR OTHER PROBLEM WITH RESPECT TO THE SEVERAL PRIVATE AMERICAN TECHNICIANS FROM THE COMPANY WHICH HAS PERFORMED THE RECONDITIONING ACCOMPANYING EQUIPMENT FOR IN SITU TESTS. THIS WOULD ESTABLISH FAVORABLE PRECEDENT FOR ENTRY OF OTHER PRIVATE US BUSINESSMEN.

4. USAID PLAYED A CRITICAL ROLE IN EFFECTUATING THE SALE; AND GOM HAS EXPLICITLY REQUESTED MR. PAUL LACERTE, AID/W TECHNICAL SPECIALIST, WHO MET GOM PURCHASING TEAM IN WASHINGTON, ACCOMPANIED THEM TO GEORGIA TO VIEW EQUIPMENT, AND IN THE PROCESS GAINED CONFIDENCE OF GOM AUTHORITIES, TO ACCOMPANY PRIVATE TECHNICIANS AND GOM OFFICIALS DURING TESTING PROCEDURE.

5. IN VIEW OF TECHNICAL-COMMERCIAL NATURE OF EVENT, LOW LEVEL OF PROJECTED USG PARTICIPATION, AND IN LIGHT OF REFTEL LEGAL RULING, WE SEE NO PROBLEM IN LACERTE ACCOMPANYING PARTY. TIMING DEPENDS ON HOW SOON GOM DEPOSITS FUNDS, BUT TRIP COULD TAKE PLACE BY FIRST HALF MAY. EARLY DEPARTMENTAL CONCURRENCE REQUESTED.
ANDERSON

NOTE BY OCT: #REFTEL APPARENTLY INCORRECT.

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Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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